

Weather Effects on Arizona Agriculture in 2006

With Arizona's diverse topography, the State's temperatures range from the wintertime cold in the higher mountain areas to the searing summertime heat of the desert areas. Arizona's wide spectrum of climate and terrain support a remarkable agricultural diversity. Virtually all crops in Arizona are irrigated, meaning yield variability is less influenced by rainfall here than in the rain-dependent agricultural states. Weather conditions are still important to crop farmers in making planting and harvesting decisions. The highest recorded temperature in 2006 was 119 degrees at Parker during the week ending July 23. Grand Canyon recorded the lowest temperature of 3 degrees below zero during the weeks ending January 22 and March 19.

January: Alfalfa condition was mostly good. Range and pasture conditions ranged from very poor to poor throughout the month. Livestock were in fair condition, stock water and soil moisture were short, and insect damage was light. Temperatures were above normal for the beginning of the month and below normal for the ending. Temperatures ranged from a high of 83 degrees to a low of 3 degrees below zero. Little rainfall throughout the month left all the reporting stations below normal.

February: During the third week of February small grain (barley and durum wheat) planting was virtually complete. Alfalfa, range and pasture remained the same as January. Temperatures were above normal with a high of 86 degrees and a low of 1 degree below zero. Precipitation remained below normal all month.

March: Temperatures were below normal for March. Temperatures ranged from a high of 87 degrees to a low of 3 degrees below zero. Precipitation fell throughout the month, but most stations remained at below normal levels. Alfalfa condition ranged from fair to good, while range and pasture continued the same as the previous months. Cotton planting began the second week of March.

April: Precipitation was still below normal at all of the reporting stations. Temperatures were above normal ranging from a high of 100 degrees to a low of 18 degrees. Cotton planting was over half finished by the final week of the month. By the third week over half of the small grain acreage had headed.

May: Alfalfa was rated in good to excellent condition. Range and pasture conditions remained the same as the previous month with little help from the rainfall. Small grain (barley and durum wheat) harvest began the final week and virtually all acreage had headed. Temperatures were above normal hitting a high of 107.

June: Cotton planting was virtually completed by week one and cotton bolls started to set the third week of June. Crop conditions remained mostly good. Temperatures were above normal for the month with a high of 114 degrees and a low of 23 degrees. Precipitation continued below normal for all stations.

July: July brought much needed rain to Arizona. Small grain (barley and durum wheat) harvest was virtually completed by week two. Cotton squaring was finished by the third week of the month. Temperatures were above normal reaching a high of 119. Only one station had received above normal precipitation to date.

August: Alfalfa was in mostly good shape. Range and pasture conditions continued very poor to poor. Cotton bolls finished setting around the second week of August. Cotton harvesting began in Yuma around the first week. Temperatures were mostly above normal for the month. Temperatures ranged from 113 to 36 degrees.

September: Rainfall continued throughout the month slowing cotton harvesting in the Yuma area. Cotton condition was mostly good. The percent of acreage with open bolls was behind the 5-year average. Temperatures were mostly below normal for the month. Temperatures ranged from 114 to 22 degrees.

October: October brought mostly below normal temperatures in the middle of the month with a high of 101 degrees and a low of 18 degrees. Alfalfa and cotton conditions stayed mostly fair to good. Range and pasture conditions started to improve with the continued rainfall. Cotton harvest was 43 percent complete by month's end, but behind the five year average.

November: November brought temperatures mostly above normal with a high of 96 degrees and a low of 10 degrees. Little to no rain fell during the latter half of the month. Cotton harvest was at 72 percent complete by the end of the month. Range and pasture conditions were mostly fair to good.

December: Alfalfa, range and pasture conditions stayed nearly the same as they had throughout the end of the year. By the end of the month, cotton harvest was near completion. Small grain planting started the second week across the State. Temperatures were mostly below normal for this time of year, with a high of 82 degrees and a low of 1 degree.